

# Catoctin

Mountain Park • Maryland



At Catoctin Mountain Park you can read the story of one group of people and the effect they had on the land. It is written in old stone fences, logging roads, and the growth that now covers the land. Read it well. Whatever your reason for visiting the park—to hike, picnic, camp, or enjoy a scenic drive—you will leave with a better understanding of the world of which you are a part.

## THE MOUNTAIN

More than 600 million years ago Eastern North America was shaped by increasing pressures within the earth. As the forces increased, the surface cracked, allowing a great quantity of molten rock from the earth's interior to cover the land. Now known as the Catoctin greenstone, a remnant of this lava flow may be seen as distinctive green rock along Hog Rock Trail.

As time passed, the land subsided beneath encroaching seas and the cooled lava became the sea floor. For millions of years this floor was buried beneath thousands of feet of sediments, whose great weight compacted the bottom layers into the weather-resistant Weaverton quartzite. Today this formation is the crest of the entire Catoctin Mountain ridge. Examples can be seen at Wolf and Chimney Rock.

As the seas receded and the weight on the underlying rocks lessened, the earth's crust was again deformed by pressures from beneath its surface. This time, however, the crust was folded, wrinkled, and uplifted. Thus was formed the Appalachian Mountain chain. When young, it was a majestic range, higher than the Rocky Mountains of today.

Surface forces—wind and rain, heat and cold—acted on this great mountain chain. The rocks slowly cracked, crumbled, and were eroded away. The mountains you enjoy today are but the roots of the original formation.

## PRE-HISTORIC MAN

Little evidence remains of the Indians who lived in Maryland before 1608. We know there were many small tribes of both the Southeastern Farmers and Northeastern Woodsmen Indian groups. They lived by farming, hunting, and fishing. These people did not claim ownership of the land, but used it for the benefit of all.

When the first European explorers arrived in Maryland, the Indians were engaged in a series of wars. Gradually they moved their towns toward the centers of their nations for mutual protection. Maryland became a middle or neutral ground where no Indians lived permanently, but it was crossed by hunting or warring parties.

By 1733, when the first settlers came to this section, Indians were seldom seen. The name "Catoctin" is believed to have come from a tribe that at one time lived at the foot of the mountains near the Potomac River—the Kittoctons.

## THE SETTLERS

The Monocacy River Valley, at the foot of Catoctin Mountain Park, was one of the first inland frontier settlements of Colonial America. Land-seeking farmers pushed west from Philadelphia until they reached the Susquehanna River, then turned southwest. They followed old Indian trails, first walking then using wagons after the trails became wider. In 1732 they began to settle along the Monocacy River, attracted by Lord Baltimore's offer of 200 acres of land rent free for 3 years and 1 cent an acre each year thereafter.

These first settlers were a mixture of second generation Americans and immigrants from the Palatinate section of Germany—the "bread basket" of Europe at that time—seeking religious freedom.

About 1758 the immigrants included a number of Swiss, who selected the mountain valleys for their farm settlements. They were soon followed by more German farmers and were later joined by Scotch-Irish settlers.

## MAN ON THE MOUNTAIN

Man's use of Catoctin Mountain evolved in two patterns. In the shallow valleys on top of the mountain he farmed and created settlements; on the eastern slope he turned the available resources to industrial use.

*The Eastern Slope.* As you hike or drive the eastern slope, you will notice traces of old roads through the forests. Originally the timber was used for making charcoal to fuel Catoctin Furnace, at the foot of the mountain about 3 miles south.

A self-guiding walk at the Thurmont Vista Parking Area shows charcoal making as it was practiced on Catoctin Mountain.

As the villages in Monocacy Valley developed, tanneries came into existence. The tanners turned to the mountain for oak and chestnut bark, a rich source of tannin.

Logging was practiced on the eastern slope, as it was throughout the mountain. On the opposite side of Big Hunting Creek from park headquarters, an old vertical sawmill at one time operated in what is now Cunningham Falls State Park.

*The Mountain Valleys.* The first settlers in the mountain-top valleys were farmers. They cleared their fields, planted crops, and built homes and barns. Remnants of these old farms can be found as you stroll in the woods—stone fences and cellar pits where farmhouses once stood.

Many of the farmers supplemented their living by working for Catoctin Furnace and by logging. A sawmill was once in operation on Owens Creek opposite the campground theater. Along Deerfield Nature Trail, an old mountain road, are remains of several farms and charcoal hearths.

## THE TURNPIKE ERA

In the early 1800's, the Congress of the United States passed an act to build the National Road from Cumberland, Md., into the Ohio Country. To provide an eastern extension for the National Road, the Maryland Legislature authorized construction of the Hagerstown-Westminster Turnpike. Although the National Road eventually crossed Catoctin Mountain to the south, what is now Md. 77 was improved as a turnpike and for a time was the principal road to the West.

The turnpike intersected a north-south road that had its origin at Emmitsburg near the Pennsylvania border. At this intersection, David Wolf built an inn and tavern that became a major stop for turnpike travelers. Around Wolf's Tavern grew the village that is now Foxville, just west of the park boundary. Manahan Road, a section of the old Emmitsburg Road, runs through the park.

## OVERUSE OF THE LAND

Clear-cutting of the land for charcoal making, stripping trees of their bark for tannin, logging, unscientific farming practices—all contributed to the overuse and destruction of the land. With the passing years it became more and more difficult for the mountain people to eke out a living.

In 1936 the Federal Government purchased properties on which 50 families resided. Only eight of these families were able to make a living entirely from their land, 26 of the families involved supplemented their income by part-time jobs, and 16 families were on relief. These people were helped relocate on more productive lands. The property acquired by the Government was developed to demonstrate the possibilities of creating parks from worn-out lands, and was called Catoctin Recreational Demonstration Area.

In 1954, Maryland was given 4,446 acres to be managed for recreational use; it is now known as Cunningham Falls State Park.

## THE MOUNTAIN TODAY

Under the management of the National Park Service, 5,769 acres of the original recreational demonstration area have been permitted to develop toward an eastern hardwood climax forest. As you walk the trails of the eastern slope you will find chestnut oak, hickory, black birch, and a scattering of other types of trees. Old fields in the mountain valleys are now covered with black locust, wild cherry, sassafras, and yellow-poplar. In moist areas you will find red oak, beech, yellow-poplar, yellow birch, hemlock, ash, and white oak.

Today the mountains are inhabited by the animals that have been able to adapt to man's changes: white-tailed deer, raccoons, woodchucks, gray squirrels, chipmunks, opossums, and a few red and gray foxes.

Ruffed grouse, barred owls and turkey vultures are common in the park throughout the year. A variety of migratory song birds visit the area in spring, summer, and autumn. A list of Catoctin's birds is available at the visitor center.

**SAFETY TIP**  
Play in the Park  
Don't skin your bark

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## LOCATION

The park is 65 miles north of Washington, D.C. The main entrance is on Md. 77, three miles west of Thurmont, which is on U.S. 15 between Frederick and Gettysburg, Pa.

## ADMINISTRATION

Catoctin Mountain Park is administered by the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior. A superintendent, whose address is Thurmont, MD 21788, is in immediate charge.

For further information about the park, visit the headquarters office, or telephone 301-824-2574.

As the Nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has basic responsibilities for water, fish, wildlife, mineral, land, park, and recreational resources. Indian and Territorial affairs are other major concerns of America's "Department of Natural Resources." The Department works to assure the wisest choice in managing all our resources so each will make its full contribution to a better United States—now and in the future.

National Park Service  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

## FOR YOUR ENJOYMENT

**Scenic drive.** Park Central Road, the main park road, winds through the hardwood forest for 4.6 miles. A 7-mile self-guiding auto tour along the back roads of Catoctin leads to places of scenic and historic interest. These roads are not high-speed highways; for your safety, 30 m.p.h. speed limits are enforced.

**Hiking.** Twelve miles of well-marked trails traverse the park, leading to outstanding views and natural features. Parking areas are provided at trail heads; parking in undesignated areas is not allowed.

**Self-guiding trails.** Hog Rock and Deerfield Trails are nature-oriented, with leaflets available at the trail heads. Charcoal Trail is provided with signs that explain the coaling process. Blue Blazes Still Trail starts at the visitor center.

**Snowmobile-bridle Trail.** This 6-mile-long trail is open for snowmobile use December 1 to April 1 and for horses the remainder of the year. Snowmobiles and horses are restricted to this trail and are not allowed on hiking trails.

**Picnicking.** Two developed picnic areas, Owens Creek and Chestnut, offer modern comfort stations, tables, fireplaces, and trash receptacles. Picnic tables are located at other spots throughout the park; fires are not permitted at these sites.

**Camping.** The Owens Creek Campground is available from mid-April through October for family camping. Modern restrooms, tables, and fireplaces are provided. Camping is limited to 5 consecutive days and 14 days per season; a nominal fee is charged. Because of the terrain, trailers more than 22 feet in length are not permitted.

A primitive tent-camping area can be used by Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, and other organizations on a reservation basis. For information contact park headquarters.

**Interpretive services.** A full program of interpretive services such as guided walks, talks, campfire programs, and folk-culture demonstrations is offered. A schedule is available at the visitor center, which houses a small museum. The "Man in His Environment" museum in Round Meadow Camp is open summer weekends.

**Group camps.** Three organization camps—Misty Mount, Greentop, and Round Meadow—are used primarily for environmental education. On spring and fall weekends they are available to organized groups on a reservation basis. During summer they are used by scouts, 4-H clubs, the handicapped, underprivileged, and others to provide an outdoor experience.

**Camp David,** the Presidential Retreat, is closed to the public.

## REGULATIONS

- **Build fires** only in fireplaces.
- **Confine pets** by keeping them on a leash at all times. They are not permitted in buildings or in group camps.
- **Deposit litter** in receptacles provided at all parking and picnic areas and at the campground.
- **Obey State fishing** regulations.
- **Leave natural features** as you find them. Do not deface or remove trees, wildflowers, other plants, or rocks.
- **Firearms** (including air pistols, bows, and slingshots) are not allowed in this wildlife sanctuary, nor is the hunting, killing, wounding, frightening, or capture of wildlife.

